

# Akron City

September-December 2006

Unlocking Akron's

## Potential

Blending Ingenuity & History  
in South Akron

Old Airdock, new Biomedical Corridor mean  
Technology Jobs

Ohio Ballet Memories



## From the Mayor...

I see and talk to a lot of people in my job. Few residents ever hesitate to tell me what's on their mind. And if they don't see me at a ward meeting, a school meeting, a neighborhood festival, or at a downtown event, they let me know—by letter, by e-mail, and by phone calls to my office.

And what I hear most often, recently confirmed by a statewide poll, is that when Ohioans are asked what the “most important issue” is in the upcoming election for governor, there is no doubt what you care most about—Education.

Corruption at the statehouse, gas prices, health care costs, and even taxes are way behind in the polling. Education is the Number 1 priority of Ohioans (with Jobs in second place.)

People can't understand why our state legislature has disregarded the law, even when they were ordered by the Supreme Court to find a “fix” for the complicated financial formula that unfairly burdens homeowners with the costs of public schools.

People find it ridiculous that the leaders they have elected can't find a better way to pay for public schools than the property tax.

I've given up on our legislature, but I refuse to give up on our children. Especially those kids who never get a say on what type of home they are born into—those who rely MOST on our public schools as the key to a better life.

That's why I have been quietly working behind the scenes for the last year and a half on fixing Ohio's school funding problems.

The solution will be a proposal you will vote on, a ballot issue that will put the “fix” where it belongs—in Ohio's constitution.

In 2005, as president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, I started meeting with Ohio mayors. At first it was just the big city mayors, but for well over a year now, the mayors of Ohio's 21 largest cities have been getting together regularly to see if we can solve the school funding issue. School superintendents have also joined us. So have representatives of teachers groups, the school boards association, the PTAs, and people from around Ohio who are sick and tired of waiting for someone else to do it.

The Ohio Mayors Education Roundtable is close to getting a broad consensus from a lot of different groups on what a fair system might look like to support public schools.

I wish I could tell you today that we have the answer to Ohio school problems. We don't, but I believe that in 2007, we'll have broad support for a constitutional amendment that—once and



**Mayor Plusquellic works on science projects with students at McEbright and Findley Elementary schools as part of a program sponsored by DuPont and the U.S. Conference of Mayors to encourage careers in chemistry and engineering.**

for all—will allow Ohioans to pay taxes for schools in the fairest way possible, and to stop the craziness of superintendents having to beg for money every three or four years.

I'd like to tell you that I will never ask you for another property tax increase again. If we adopt the reforms that Ohio mayors—Republican, Democrat, and Independent—will be advocating next year, I hope that I won't ever have to, again.

In the meantime, we really need your help because the state doesn't give us a reasonable alternative. We must pass the Akron Public Schools tax levy in November. Without it, despite all of the progress we have made as a community and as a school system, we could slip into a free fall with property values declining, residents moving out, good teachers leaving, and our children getting cheated.

Please support Akron's Public Schools with your vote in November. 



# Akron City

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## Our Cover Photo...

...is **Bruce Ford's** photo of the new section of the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath completed this summer from North Street to Beech Street, bringing the hike and bike trail right into the heart of Downtown Akron. This is the steepest section of the towpath, and is fully accessible to all.

**Tell us what you think** by replying to [editor@ci.akron.oh.us](mailto:editor@ci.akron.oh.us)

Or share your thoughts with the mayor at [mayor@ci.akron.oh.us](mailto:mayor@ci.akron.oh.us)

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# Table of Contents

## 4 South Akron

New Housing  
 Spurs Rebirth



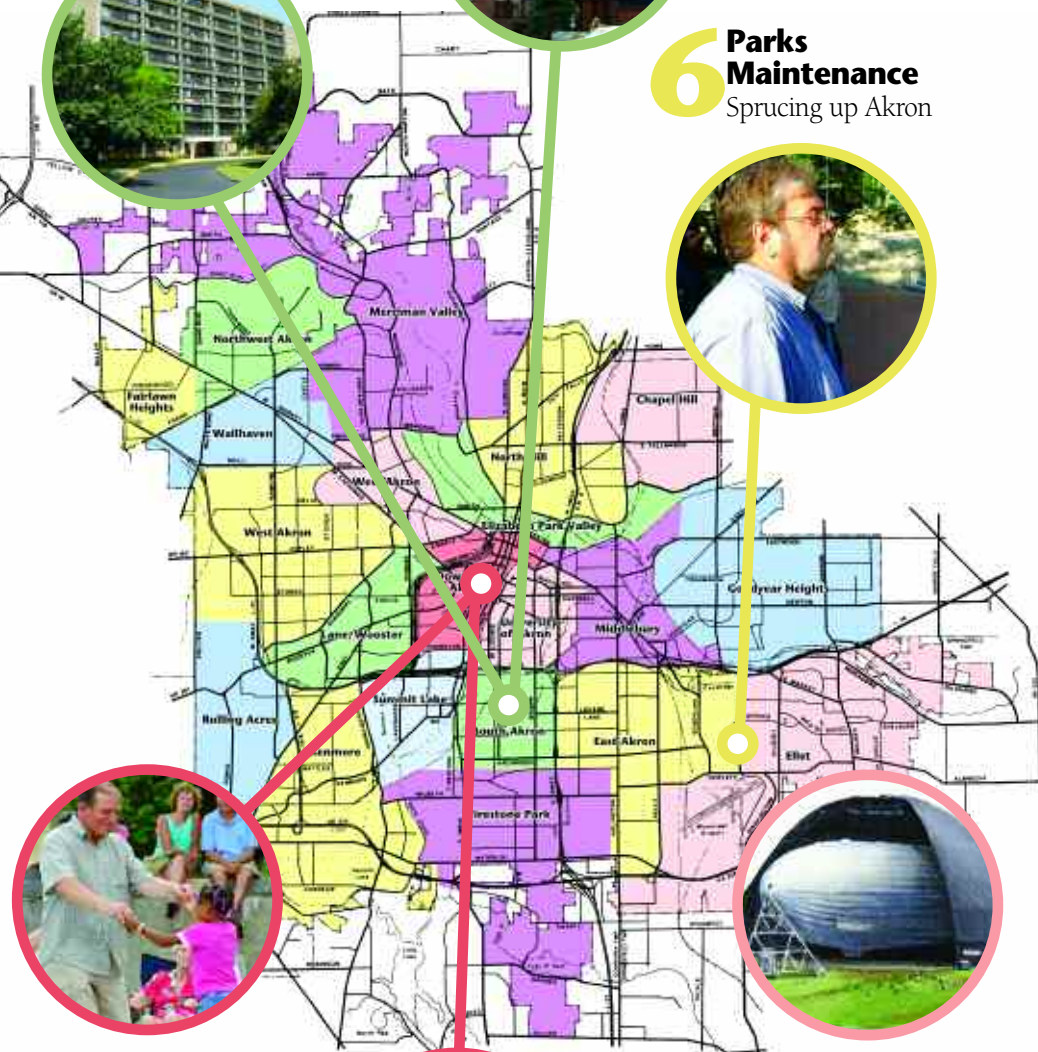
## 5 South Main Street

Blending History  
 and Hot Tech



## 6 Parks Maintenance

Sprucing up Akron



## 8 Happenings

Farmers Market,  
 Akron Art Expo,  
 LeBron's Bikeathon and  
 More



## 13 Airdock

Landmark  
 Revisited

## 11 Biomedical Corridor

Unifying Healthcare Assets



## New Homes, New Residents in South Akron



One of Akron's oldest neighborhoods, South Akron originally served as a settlement for farmers, traders and merchants who used the Ohio & Erie Canal in the mid-1800s.

In later decades, South Akron was home to large communities of immigrants from Europe, who came here to work in the City's rubber plants and other industries. Although many of South Akron's factories are idled, the community has maintained a semblance of its industrial heritage, along with its diverse population.

But nowadays, the older housing stock of South Akron is steadily being replaced by new homes that have brought an influx of new residents, including families, young professionals, and empty nesters.

As the only City neighborhood that cur-

rently offers first-rate housing near downtown, South Akron has become an attractive destination for home seekers, says Ward 5 Councilman Jim Shealey. "The neighborhood is going from a project-type housing community to a homeownership community," he notes.

Much of South Akron's new housing has been developed by Alpha Phi Alpha Homes, a nonprofit affiliate of the Akron alumni chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity. Recent Alpha Homes' projects include The Landings at Canal Park and The Townhomes at Canal Park, which are both market-rate condominium developments.

For Kathryn Shafer, an education consultant who lives in The Townhomes at Canal Park, South Akron offers many benefits, including affordable housing, walking distance to downtown restaurants and attractions, and an eclectic, heterogeneous atmosphere. "There is a sense of community that isn't often found in the suburbs," she says. "There are people from all over the world living here, so we have a global perspective."

A 15-year resident of South Akron, Shafer says the neighborhood enjoys a somewhat secluded location, yet offers easy



access to urban conveniences. "It's surprising how much nature we have here," she says. "There are lots of trees and hundreds of species of birds and other wildlife."

Noting that the nearby canal is a "great asset" to the neighborhood, Shafer says she often walks along the waterway for exercise.

In recent years, Alpha Homes has renovated Channelwood Village, an apartment complex for lower-income households. The organization originally built Channelwood in 1972 to provide suitable housing for neighborhood families, explains Jimmie Thomas II, deputy executive director of Alpha Phi Alpha Homes. "The idea was to put back some of the housing lost through the Opportunity Park urban renewal project in the 1960s," he says, adding that Alpha Homes and the Akron Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity chapter moved into new headquarters in South Akron this year. Formerly a BF Goodrich union hall, the facility will be used as office space and to host community activities. ©



Townhomes at Canal Park rest in the shadow of the old BF Goodrich factory. APA Homes maintains Channelwood (top) and the Landings (bottom).







**Neighborhoods**  
**Canal Place**

# Entrepreneurs Key Redevelopment of old BF Goodrich, Selle Buildings

Robert Sberna

Just 20 years ago, the stretch of abandoned BF Goodrich buildings along South Main Street was a grim reminder of the City's industrial decline. At that time, BF Goodrich was planning to demolish the structures and market the property.

But visionary developers recognized the potential of purchasing the old factories and transforming them into stimulating work environments that would appeal to young, creative, upwardly mobile professionals.

Redeveloped as Canal Place and the AES Business Campus, the buildings are now emblematic of Akron's evolution from an industrial powerhouse into a high-tech knowledge center.

The rubber workers of yesteryear are gone—replaced by graphic designers, architects, attorneys, advertising agency professionals, engineers, and computer and telecomm geeks. The spirit of industry and innovation that made Akron the "Rubber Capital" has been reignited throughout Canal Place and the AES building, as well as at the nearby Selle Generator Works and GoJo Industries. With a combined 4,000 people working in the South Main Street area, the district serves as a showcase for the City's efforts to bring tech jobs to Akron.

Totalling 1.4 million square feet, Canal Place is home to more than 100 companies, employing about 2,200. "With all the different types of firms here, there's a lot of potential for shared resources and knowledge," says Stephen Stoner, facilities man-

ager for Canal Place.


Stoner adds that Canal Place, a vacant BF Goodrich factory redeveloped in 1988, has been a catalyst in the revitalization of downtown Akron. "Canal Place has encouraged people to come and see what South Akron can be."

The Tell Companies transformed a former BF Goodrich property into the AES complex in 1994. Along with the headquarters of Advanced Elastomer Systems (AES), a polymer research firm, the building also houses the Brouse, McDowell law firm and Malone Advertising, one of Northeast Ohio's largest ad agencies.

Across from Canal Place is the Selle Generator Works, a post-incubator business office. Built in 1885 as the Selle Wagon Wheel & Gear factory, the facility was redeveloped in 2002 by Tony Troppe and Todd Ederer.

By adapting old buildings for reuse, Troppe says developers are creating "cool environments" that will attract youthful, creative types. "These workers are going to enjoy the patina of old brick versus the drywall of modern offices," he notes.

At Selle (pronounced "SELL-ee"), the anchor tenant is Summa Enterprise Group, an entrepreneurial subsidiary of Summa Health System that was created to bring health-based products and services to the market.

Troppe says that cities of the future will be built around knowledge centers such as the Selle Generator Works and Canal Place. In Akron's case, the proximity of the University of Akron, GoJo Industries and Akron's industrial incubator at Canal Place, will bring synergies in which "people can translate ideas to marketplace," he adds. 

Today meets yesterday at the Selle complex (top), while BFG's former "mahogany row" is home to Canal Place tenants (bottom).



# Akron stays Clean & Green

by Robert Sberna



Parks Manager Bob Reed (center) directs crane operations at Cascade Plaza, as Eric Poole (far left) Carl Wunderlee (rear center) and Jim Monk (right) get ready to climb into action.

While his workday is not exactly a walk in the park, City employee Dave DeGraw says he has an ideal job.

DeGraw, an equipment operator in the Parks Maintenance Department, spends the summer and spring months grading and maintaining the City's ball fields. "I get to be outside in the nice park environment with people I enjoy working with," says DeGraw, adding, "It's a good feeling to look back at a freshly graded ball field and know that kids will be playing baseball and enjoying themselves."

DeGraw, a 31-year City employee who

has spent the past nine years in Parks Maintenance, is responsible for leaf removal in the fall, and snow and ice removal in the winter months. "No matter what time of year it is, I get satisfaction in knowing that I'm helping to provide a clean, safe environment for the people of Akron."

Along with maintaining more than 1200 acres of City parks and 107 ball fields, the 43-member Parks Maintenance crew has a wide range of responsibilities. "A lot of people don't even realize that more than half of our time and effort is not spent on City parks," notes Bob Reed, acting superintendent of the Parks Maintenance Department.

Divided into North, South and West Districts, the department's summer duties include mowing, trimming, trash collection, parking lot cleaning and grading, tennis and basketball court cleaning, landscaping,

herbicide application, and fertilizing and seeding athletic fields and downtown parks.

The department also performs forestry duties such as maintenance of trees on curb strips, parks and City rights-of-way, storm damage clean up, contractual stump removal, and tree trimming and removal. In the South District, workers perform field preparation at Firestone Stadium for all Akron Racers games as well as maintaining the stadium's infields, bleachers, flower beds, and restrooms. The North District crew oversees landscaping at downtown parks, as well as special event setups.

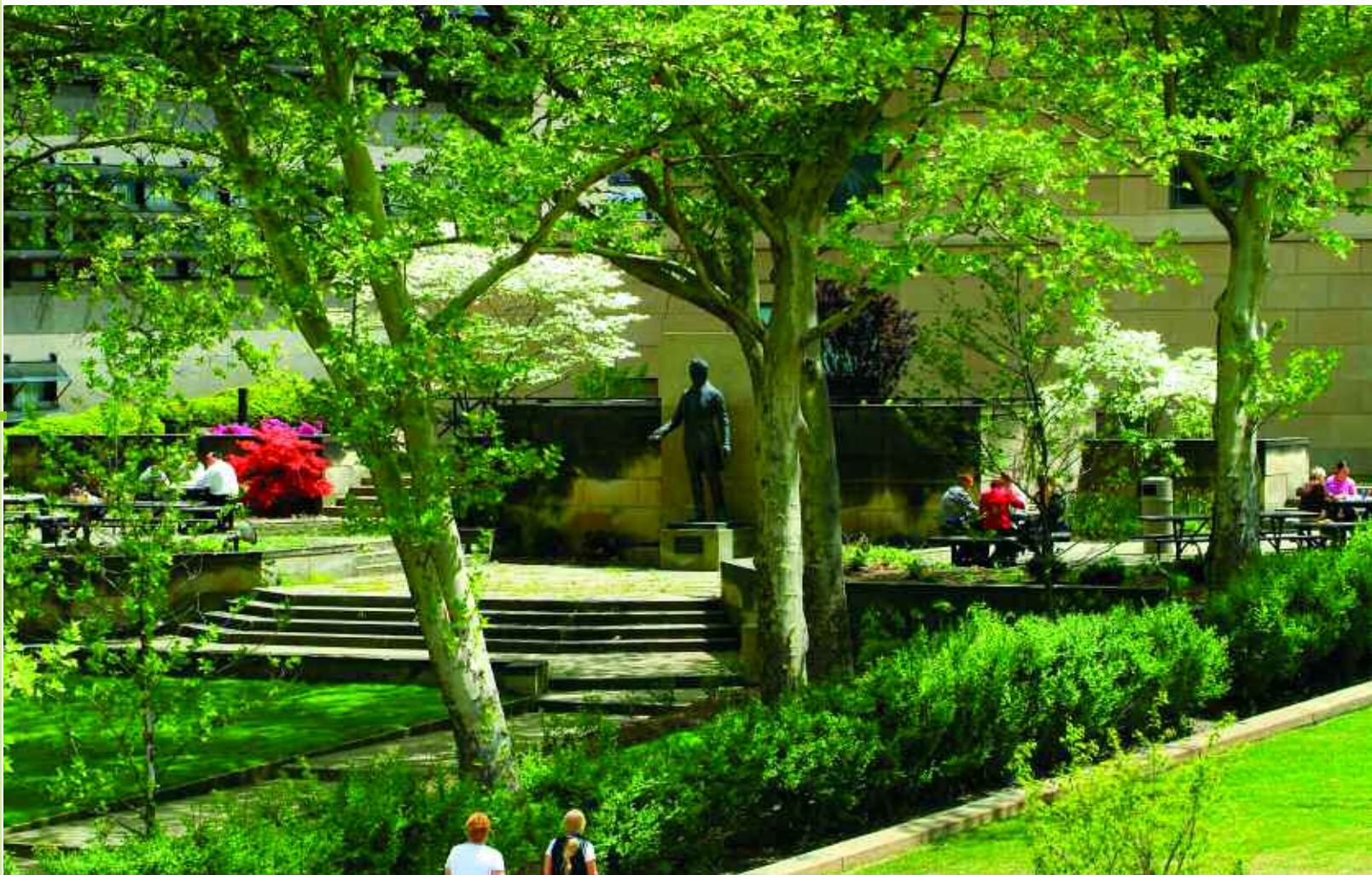
In the winter, Parks Maintenance workers provide drivers and trucks for salting and plowing various City roadways, community centers and several downtown parks. In addition, the department has responsibility for installing holiday banners on downtown walk bridges and hanging Christmas decorations above downtown streets and at various locations throughout the City.

Summing up Parks Maintenance's importance to City residents, Paul Barnett, Manager of Akron's Public Works Bureau, says, "Without their efforts, there would be no recreation events. You wouldn't be able to see your kids play baseball. Snow and ice control wouldn't happen in the winter. And after a bad storm, people would have to take care of their own debris."

Barnett explains, "When we get a bad storm, whether it's a tornado, high winds, or an ice storm, it's typical for a lot of trees to go down. The Parks Maintenance guys respond to all the downed trees in the City. They excel at that, in comparison to many other municipalities. Their average response time is about four hours for a downed tree or limb."

He also credits Reed and the other Parks Maintenance workers for what he calls their





“world class ice and snow removal skills.” Saying that the department members are a very dedicated group, Barnett notes, “These guys will work 12 hours a day, seven days a week. On most Thanksgivings, Christmas Days and New Year’s Days, they are on duty.”

A City employee for 29 years, Reed credits Barnett’s management skills for bringing a sense of teamwork to Parks Maintenance and the other departments of the Public Works Bureau. “Since he got here nine years ago, we’ve come to share equipment and manpower with other City departments,” Reed says. “For example, after a massive storm about four years ago, other departments helped us with tree removal. And, after a bad winter, Parks Maintenance will help out with patching potholes in the spring.”



In Barnett’s view, Citywide sharing of resources is a cost-effective strategy. “This kind of teamwork among departments is a

way of saving money, and the residents can see that the work gets done a lot faster,” he explains.

In recent years, Parks Maintenance has implemented several cost-saving practices such as renting a tub grinder to create mulch from tree debris. “By recycling wood waste, we’re saving about \$100,000 a year in mulch costs,” Reed says. “Instead of paying \$22 for a cubic yard of mulch, our cost is about \$4 a yard, because we’re grinding our own.”

Reed says many of the landscaping and forestry techniques employed by his department can be used by residents who want to spruce up their own lawns and trees. For example, he notes, “The best thing you can do is fertilize your lawn in the spring. Also, don’t mow your lawn too close. The tighter you mow it, the more problems you’ll have. Keep the grass height at about three inches so it doesn’t burn out.”



For novice tree-pruners, Reed says, “Cut the branches no more than a half-inch from the tree trunk, and make the cut parallel to the trunk. And, keep in mind that you can prune any time of the year. Pruning promotes growth.”

Despite his knowledge and experience in tree-pruning, landscaping and mowing, Reed says his yard at home isn’t particularly well-groomed. “I’m too busy working to take care of my own yard,” he says. ©



**Beautiful Charles Goodyear Park is kept as an oasis for downtown workers who picnic during the lunch hour. Daffodils decorate the ornamental iron fence at Grace Park (lower right).**



# What A Summer



**"King for Kids" Bikeathon**– LeBron James (right) donated bicycles to 300 Akron students (above) who demonstrated good character to win the attention of teachers and mentors. The children's 1-mile ride was part of the LeBron James "King for Kids" Bikeathon in June that drew several thousand riders to travel the 8-mile course through the streets of Akron.



**The Beacon Countryside Farmers Market** continues on Thursday afternoons, 3pm - 6:30pm, in Downtown Akron through September. The Cuyahoga Valley Countryside Conservancy brings locally grown produce and homemade products each week to the corner of High St. and Cedar.



**The MAPS Air Show** put kids in the pilot's seat during "Ohio's Most Exciting Air Show" at Fulton Airport in June. This years showed featured acrobatic fly-bys and performances by the Horizon Blue Aerobatic Team and Firebirds Solo Aerobatic Aircraft.



## This is



Peter Noone

**Independence Day in Akron** featured one of the city's best fireworks displays ever, the annual Akron Family Barbeque, and music every day for five straight days. Lock 3 Live's Old School Soul performance attracted more than 4,000 fans (lower right)





# ...r This Has Been!

## AKRON

Photos by Bruce Ford



Wanda Hunt

Micky Dolenz



Photos by Stefanik Photography

**Tuba Summer**, sponsored by Downtown Akron Partnership at Cascade Plaza got several thousand horn fans in the mood to sing along with director Tucker Jolly (above), and a few even took to the dance floor (left).

**The Akron Auto Showcase** put \$4 million of brand new domestic and imported cars and trucks along Main Street, with local auto dealers and Rubber City Radio inviting residents to look, see, and buy new vehicles



Photos by Stefanik Photography

**Akron Art Expo** celebrated its 27th year at Hardesty Park with a kick-off "Taste of Akron" sponsored with West Point Market. Jacob (left) and Alex (right) Weber took advantage of the face painting booth, while others bought art items and crafts, and watched Ohio Ballet.





## Community

### Akron Public Schools Embark on a New Course

By Becky Johnson, RD, LD, Child Nutrition Services, Akron Public Schools and Mary Ann McGuckin, RD, LD, Public Health Nutritionist, Akron Health Department

"Children of today may be the first generation to die at younger ages than their parents!"

**Q:** What is the basis of this warning from national health researchers?

**A:** It is children's growing obesity!


Studies have found that children today are less active than children of the past and are exposed to much more high-calorie junk food and sugary soda pop.

There is no quick fix for this problem. The solution requires changes in lifestyle. The Akron Public Schools' Child Nutrition Services has already taken the first steps to becoming part of solution for Akron students. Child Nutrition Services (CNS) provides school breakfasts and lunches that meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Now, through the recent creation of the Akron Schools' Wellness Policy, CNS has established the basis for promoting good nutrition, healthy food and physical activity throughout the school day and after school.

The Wellness Policy, which was written by CNS staff, teachers, principals, school district officials and community members, is designed to produce a continuous experience of good nutrition and adequate physical activity for students. Ideally, the mission of the Wellness Policy is to ensure that nutrition education is taught in each classroom, healthy meals are served in the cafeterias and at school parties, and healthy foods are sold in school stores, at fundraisers, in vending machines, and in school vocational restaurants.

Children need to be taught that physical activity is a vital aspect of good health. The Wellness Policy encourages children to be physically active before and after school, during recess, in the classroom, and in physical education classes.


It's not only important that kids learn about the benefits of healthy food and physical activity, but they need to actually see these policies put into practice on a daily basis by their school system. 



### Summer Arts Program Turns Heads

**A** giant head (right) that expresses itself with mechanical features gets attention from arts apprentices (L-R) Jamie Thompson, Nicole Fidler, Brigid Fischmann and Chad Gable, as part of Mayor Plusquellic's Lock 3 Summer Arts Experience.

The summer program gave 54 Akron high schoolers a unique opportunity to be "coached" by an arts professional and to be paid for producing public works of art.

Right, apprentice Katelynn Brenn sketches an animal that is now part of a giant mural at the Akron Zoo. Other groups produced original films, fabricated giant metal flowers for Downtown planters, designed a mural for the Library, and created a metal sculpture that has been erected on the side of FirstMerit Tower at Cascade Plaza (above). 







## Akron's Future As Simple As 'ABC'



**M**ayor Plusquellic announced an initiative to unify Akron's health-care assets into a single planning district (above) that will guide the city's development for years to come. Joining him at the announcement were Hospital Board of Trustees chairs (L-R) Phil Maynard of Children's, Rick Fedorovich of Akron General Medical Center, Tom Knoll of Summa Health System and Dr. George Newcome, University of Akron Vice

President of Research and Dean of the Graduate School.

The Akron Biomedical Corridor is bounded by Akron General Medical Center on the west, by Akron City Hospital on the east, and includes Akron Children's Hospital near the district's center. Such "Innovation Districts" are being identified round the country to attract and market clusters of like-minded technology companies. ©



## Ohio Celebrates Interstate System's 50th in South Akron

A convoy of classic cars (above) rolled through Firestone Park to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the nation's Interstate Highway System. Tire company founder Harvey Firestone was remembered at the Bridgestone USA campus as two great-grandsons participated in the event: Andrew Firestone (right) and Merrill Eisenhower Atwater (left). President Eisenhower launched the nation's Interstate system in 1956. ©

## New Sanitation Program Underway



**H**ouseholds have started receiving their new "smart cart" trash containers this month and deliveries will continue through November. The new trucks use an automated arm to empty containers at the curbside. Workers at United Disability Services stuffed instruction booklets into every one of the 60,000 carts that are being delivered. Richard Jones (above left) and George Bonnette (right) assemble packets while Phyllis Sadler (left) prepares a packet for a CurbService customer. ©





**A**ugust 6, 2006 was a gorgeous summer night, with a nearly full moon peeking over the outdoor stage at Goodyear Metropolitan Park in East Akron. About 300 people pitched lawn chairs or spread blankets to watch the final act of one of Akron's great achievements of the last half of the 20th century—the final performance of the Ohio Ballet.

Two people in the audience that night were present on October 11, 1968 when this cultural legacy began: Christine Jones-Meneer, then a teenaged dancer at the University of Akron's Dance Institute, and me.

The 38 years between the first and last performances marks a cultural era in Akron that deserves to be remembered.

In 1968, I was a 21-year-old junior at the University of Akron spending most of my waking hours at the campus radio station, when Heinz Poll handed me some 33 1/3 r.p.m. vinyl records to transfer to audio tape. The records contained the first performance in Kolbe Theater of what was to be called the Chamber Ballet.

That summer, amidst the chaos of two assassinations and the turmoil at the Democratic National Convention, there was respite at the University of Akron's Memorial Hall, where the exotic ballerina Kate Firestone rehearsed young dancers to perform new ballets in a town that some thought was a dying "rubber city."

Legendary dance teacher Nan Klinger brought Heinz Poll to Akron in 1967 (where, for a while, the German-born dancer and choreographer slept in a trailer in Klinger's back yard.) Later, with Firestone, Gena Carroll, Francia Albrecht and others, a new cultural organization was born.

Urged along by Poll's more famous partner, Broadway lighting designer Thomas Skelton, a board of trustees for the fledgling Chamber Ballet was created in 1974. Following its sensational New York debut



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Each year, the Ohio Chamber Ballet has grown, delighting its growing number of admirers. Each year, new dances have been introduced to its repertoire and current favorites repeated. Each year, costumes, scenery and lighting have surprised and pleased.

And each year, the Ohio Chamber Ballet has needed growing financial support in the form of ticket subscriptions and contributions. That's why the members of the company hope you'll support them now more than ever. They'll give you a lot in return.

Supporting the Ohio Chamber Ballet is like rooting for the home team when you discover that ballet is really a contact sport. These talented and exciting dancers are out to touch your heart.

*Ballets choreographed by guest artists:*  
JANIS DRESSER, Robert Jaffrey (FRENCH PERILATIONS), Gerald Arpadi (Tahakavali)  
And three premieres of dances new to the Ohio Chamber Ballet repertoire.

**The Ohio Chamber Ballet—1975-1976 Season:**  
GALA PERFORMANCES: October 24-25 (New Ballet II)  
SAASTRAS, December 19-20  
REPERTORY: January 30-31  
REPERTORY: March 12-13 (New Ballet II)  
REPERTORY: May 14-15 (New Ballet II)  
*(Dates may be subject to change.)*

**Ballets to be performed include those originally choreographed by:**  
HERBERT FULL, RICHARD FORBES, TWO DANCERS (JACQUES)  
RICHARD FORBES, COMPASSIONS (HUGHES), FLAGGAC  
SONG (SHIMAZAKI), GALANTE TAZEND (MURRAY), MAT-  
TERS (MUSICALS), HAZARD (GRIFFIN), DANCUS  
(KATZ), REMINISCENCE (LIND), RICHARD FORBES  
(FRENCH) ROYAL ENTERTAINMENT (HAROLD), SAASTRAS  
NIGHT (HAROLD), SWIMMING DANCERS (RICHARDSON)  
A TIME TO DANCE (GRIFFIN), ANNOUVE VARIATIONS  
(LIND), THE WITCH (Schubert).



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in 1976, Akron's Chamber Ballet was renamed "The Ohio Ballet in Residence at the University of Akron."

Sometime later, despite substantial support by the University—which provided facilities for rehearsals and paid part of the salary of the artistic director—the “in Residence” was dropped, as Ohio Ballet reached out to Cleveland’s Playhouse Square and beyond. (Was removing “Akron” from the name evidence of the community’s long-standing inferiority complex?)


For almost 30 years, Ohio Ballet was “the place” for prominent Akronites to be seen. Ohio Ballet galas and progressive dinners were a social highlight among Akron’s business leaders and their families.

Things changed. Skelton died in 1994. Poll retired as artistic director in 1999 (and died this past April at age 80.) Jeffrey Graham Hughes, a former dancer with the Joffrey Ballet and Cleveland San Jose Ballet was hired by the board to lead the company.

But Akron in 2000 was very unlike the Akron of 32 years before. No longer were

we home to five Fortune 500 companies that provided such substantial support to a single organization. No longer did young professionals feel a need to be part of the country club set to be successful. And there were newer, plentiful recreational opportunities available. Around the country, long-time dance companies were closing—in Norfolk, Oakland, Cleveland, and San Diego. Ballet performances were being cancelled in Denver and Washington D.C.

Beginning at Cascade Plaza in 1970, and continuing through this summer, the City of Akron offered free summer dance programs by Ohio Ballet to its residents—something that no other city in the United States has done (at a cost of more than \$1.5 million.) Today, we can be proud of Akron's accomplishment at sustaining a highly regarded professional resident ballet company for 38 years.

Will professional dance return to Akron?  
Let's stay on our toes, and see. 



# An old friend revisited

By Russ Musarra / Illustration by Chuck Ayers

**W**e wanted to revisit the old Airdock for two reasons: the 75th anniversary of the maiden flight of the USS Akron on Sept. 23, 1931, and to see Lockheed Martin's preparations for the \$149.2 million High Altitude Airship. A fire at the Airdock May 18 gave us a third reason to take a close look.

Our fondest wish—to walk inside the Akron landmark—could not be granted because of government security rules, but we got a short tour from Ron Browning, the company's business development director for persistent surveillance platforms and Mike Baumgartner, the High Altitude Airship program manager.

As luck would have it, two Goodyear blimps droned into view as we ventured outside. Contrary to what many believe, the blimps aren't berthed at the Airdock. Their home is Goodyear's Wingfoot Lake hangar in Suffield Township.

Baumgartner explained that the structure's size – 1,175 feet long, 325 feet wide and 211 feet high – was key to Lockheed Martin's winning the design and construction contract from the U.S. Missile Defense Agency.

**The Airdock's massive size was key to Lockheed Martin's winning the design and construction contract for the High Altitude Airship**


The High Altitude Airship will be about 500 feet long and 160 feet wide. By comparison, the blimps we're used to seeing are 192 feet long and 55 feet wide. It is designed to fly unmanned at 60,000 feet for missions of up to 30 days. Assembly is expected to start in 2008 and should take 18 months. Test flights could begin as early as 2009.

Lockheed Martin bought the Airdock from Loral in 1996 and began renovating it in preparation for the High Altitude Airship project in 2003. The City of Akron, Summit County and the State of Ohio are all partners in the project.

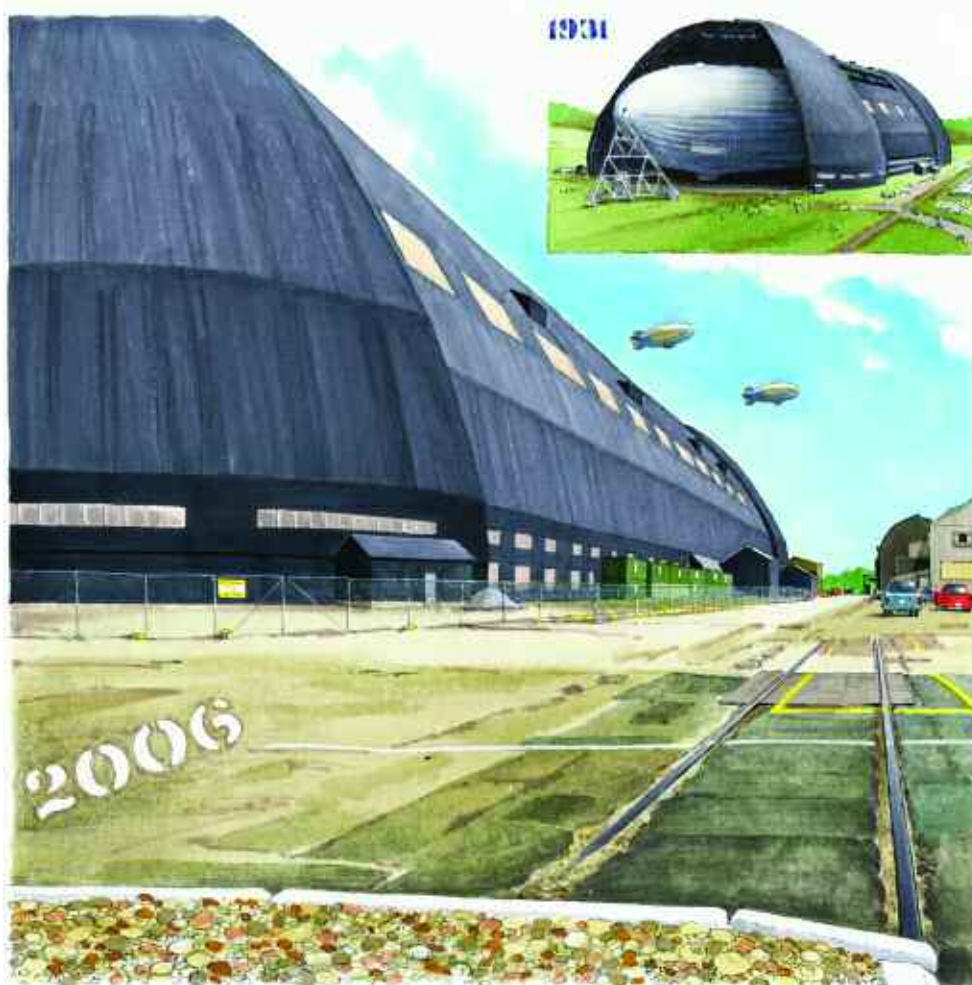
The spectacular two-alarm fire, which attracted world-wide attention and required 40 firefighters to extinguish, was confined to the northeast corner of the structure – about 25,000 square feet of the 687,000 square-foot rubberized exterior skin.

Perhaps the neatest feature we noted was

a set of old railroad tracks that just disappeared. That is, the tracks stretched toward the Airdock for a short distance, then just stopped because at least a generation or two of tarmac had been applied over them.

With these images fixed in our minds we thanked our guides and left, but not before expressing our hopes of being invited back when they get ready to inflate the airship or, if not then, when they take it outside for the world to see. 

Russ Musarra may be reached at [rmusarra@neo.rr.com](mailto:rmusarra@neo.rr.com).





## Community

### 4th Annual Healthy Baby Fair Kicks Off October Lead Awareness Month

By Billy Soule

**T**hinking about starting a family?  
Adopting? Expecting a baby?  
Caring for young children?

New and expectant parents can get their child off to a healthy and safe start in life at the Akron Health Department's 4th Annual Healthy Baby Fair, Sunday, October 1, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the John S. Knight Center.

With community partner Akron General Medical Center, the Health Department will present more than 60 exhibits offering new moms and dads helpful hints for care of their baby—before and after birth. Information will also be provided about programs, services, and businesses that will be useful for new parents.

Jane Trinter, Health Education Specialist for the Akron Health Department is the event coordinator. "We had more than 700 people attend last year's event," Trinter




says. "We saw families of all sizes lined up outside the John S. Knight Center."

What can new families expect this year? More family-orientated activities than ever before including the Baby Fair Theater with programs on pre-natal care, baby sign language, pediatric CPR and first aid. There will even be a Dad's Diaper Derby and Baby Olympic Races, sponsored by Babies "R" Us, for infants up to 18 months of age.

Sponsors for this year's program include State Farm Insurance, Unison Health Plan of Ohio, and Kiddie Kandids Portrait Studio. Kids can get a free photo in a Soap


Box Derby Car, and the first 200 families to arrive will receive a free "goodie bag."

Akron Health Department's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program will also be kicking off Lead Awareness Month at the fair to educate every parent on how lead poisoning can be avoided. Free blood lead tests for kids ages 6 months to 6 years old will be available along with information on HUD grants and cleaning kits for lead removal in pre-1978 Akron homes.

Admission and parking is free. For more information about the biggest Healthy Baby Fair ever, call (330) 375-2109 ext. 6688. 



**T**he City of Akron personally delivered five walk-behind, industrial-sized lawn mowers to the city of New Orleans, which needed to replace 650 pieces of its grass cutting equipment—lost to Hurricane Katrina last year. Bob Reed, Parks Maintenance acting superintendent (left) and Dave DeGraw, Parks Maintenance foreman (center), transported the equipment to Louisiana. Akron Tractor and Equipment Company provided

\$4,200 worth of maintenance and repair work needed to refurbish the mowers. Director of Parks for New Orleans Ann Macdonald said the people of her city are grateful. "We very much appreciate Akron's remembering us during what has been a very difficult rebuilding process. Neighbors such as Akron make this go much more smoothly for us." 





# The Town Crier

by Russ Musarra

## SYMBOLS OF HEALING

All American Soap Box Derby marketing director **KEITH GREEN** has been beating the bushes for corporate sponsors for flags to be displayed Sept. 8-11 in the Healing Field at Goodyear Metropolitan Park. The display will be a fundraiser in memory of those who perished in the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001.

"Other cities are doing it, including Findlay, Ohio, which had 4,000 flags," said Green. "We're shooting for 5,000."

Proceeds of the event will benefit the Veterans Association of Summit County, the Veterans Administration Hospital and the National Super Kids Classic, a derby race for disabled children.

To sponsor a flag or for information, call Green at the Derby office, 330-733-8723, or at 330-352-1939. ©

## REMEMBERING THOSE WHO SERVE

Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1062 Ladies Auxiliary member **JEANETTE E. BARNARD**, responding to an article in the May-August issue of *Akron City*, writes:

"It was especially gratifying to view the seven Akron City employees who, as you so aptly put it, 'Answered the Call.' Now, the VFW Post 1062 Ladies Auxiliary is ready to assist our men and women valiantly serving our county—specifically through letter writing and care packages. We stand beside our armed forces and hope a cheerful 'Hi, how are you?' will help keep up their morale."

Barnard asks anyone with loved ones deployed overseas to send specific mailing information to: Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1062, c/o Ladies Auxiliary, 1581 Main St., Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44221.

**HARRIET LYTLE** is president of the auxiliary, which also regularly entertains veterans at the Brecksville VA Hospital. ©

## MUSIC TO HER EARS

Akron native **KATE LOITZ** shared some good news recently with First Energy retiree, sousaphone player and freelance writer **RON SYROID**, who passed it along to the Town Crier. Loitz, who was office manager for **JOHN SEIBERLING** when he was in Congress, won Back Stage magazine's 2006 Bistro Award for cabaret singing, which is what she does these days in Chicago.

"This week is particularly enjoyable," Loitz wrote in a note to Syroid. "I have my last show tomorrow night, the Bistro Awards dinner is Monday night.... Then on Wednesday I leave for a week in Rome with my two oldest granddaughters (ages 14 and 11). WHEW... No one leads as complicated a life as we do!"

Whew indeed! ©

## EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH

An engineering projects coordinator and two veteran firefighters are the latest to be honored as Akron employees of the month for July, June and April. (No award was given for May and my deadline arrived before an announcement was made for August.)



**LT. DAVID SIMS**, the

July honoree, is the "B" shift supervisor of Fire Station No. 13 at Wilbeth and Brown Street in Firestone Park, which has won numerous "Keep Akron

Beautiful" awards thanks to his ongoing work indoors and out.

Sims became a firefighter/medic on November 16, 1978 and received his lieutenant's bars in 1986. His experience includes four and a half years as a Fire Prevention Bureau inspector. He and **DONNA**, his wife of 30 years, have three sons, **DAVID**, **FRANK** and **PAUL**, and a granddaughter, **CARMEN**.

June honoree **KAREN DYER** oversees more than \$10 million of construction contracts as an engineering projects coordina-



tor. Dyer joined the Bureau of Engineering's construction division as a co-op student in September 1983, left briefly in 1996, and returned in April 1997.

Dyer's areas of respon-

sibility include overseeing construction at all fire stations and the City's wheelchair ramp program and organizing the Engineering Bureau's annual seminar for engineering technicians, engineers and managers from many divisions of the Department of Public Service.

Her spare-time interests include Our Lady of the Elms High School Parent's Club, of which she is president, volunteering at Akron General Medical Center, and tennis.



Firefighter/medic **ROBERT LANGSTON**, the April honoree, joined the Akron Fire Department in October 1992 and graduated in 1995 from the Paramedic Education

Program at Akron General Medical Center, where he was recognized with the designation of Class Leader. Langston has served at Fire Station No. 4 and Medic 4, one of the Fire Department's most active locations for 11 years. Since 1995 he has helped paramedic students with their training and skills and shared his knowledge and expertise by providing CPR training to community groups.

He plays on the department golf league and enjoys family time with his wife **MALINTHEA**, and their sons **ALLAN**, 16; **KYLE**, 3; and **COLLIN**, 15 months. ©





# KEEP AKRON BEAUTIFUL

**KEEP AKRON BEAUTIFUL** can provide your group with a speaker on beautification, litter prevention, and recycling. Call KAB at 330.375.2116.

**REMEMBER**, when you need City services, or if you have questions about Akron's new sanitation program, just press 3-1-1 on your home phone, or dial 330.375.2311 from any telephone.

**Bubbles and kids**—is there an easier way to keep children entertained? Bruce Ford caught this young lady during the "Old School Soul" concert at Lock 3 on July 1.

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